

**CASCADIA CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR DISTRICT MEETING
Upstairs Conference Room
14 N Mission St.
Wenatchee, WA 98801
Thursday, February 20, 2020
3:30 p.m.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Roger Wristen, Auditor; Jim Bartelme, Member; and Dillon Miller, Member.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Josh Koempel, Chair; and Junell Wentz, Vice Chair.

OTHERS PRESENT: Mike Baden, WSCC; Chris Wright, NRCS; Abigail Nickelson and Matthew Bischof, WSDA; Jeff Pierce, guest; and the following District staff: Peggy Entzel, Mike Cushman, Valerie Hampton, Sandy Letzing, and Nada Wentz.

Jim Bartelme, Member, called the meeting to order at 3:39 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Matt Bischof and Abigail Nickelson, from the Washington State Department of Agriculture, introduced themselves and briefly talked about the work they do. Some of that work includes providing water quality data to growers, monitoring water conditions in the watershed, and providing resources for growers for pesticide management and applications.

Jeff Pierce is the Holden Fire Marshall. He and his family are new to the Wenatchee area. He wants to connect with different agencies in the community to learn about their roles in the county. He thanked the District for our help and involvement in the Chelan County Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP).

CONSENT AGENDA

Approve the Minutes of the January 16, 2020 Regular District Meeting, approve the Treasurer's Report, and authorize payment of bills.

M/S/C Dillon moved and Roger seconded to approve the Consent Agenda. (Unanimous)

CORRESPONDENCE

Amy Bridges emailed that she could not attend the meeting today.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) REPORT

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) application deadline is April 26. There are currently 12 to 14 applications in Chelan County. Funding availability is expected to be similar to last year's amounts. Two site visits resulted from the Grower meeting in January. The Local Work Group discussed resource concerns at their meeting but had a low turnout from Chelan County. There will be another meeting in Chelan later this spring. The Area Conservationist position previously held by Alan McBee has not been filled yet.

NRCS national office will be conducting an audit in Waterville. A brief discussion followed about the Civil Rights Responsibilities between NRCS and the District. Information was emailed to the Board prior to the meeting. One of the items the national office will be watching for is the presence of required posters at NRCS offices.

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION (WSCC) REPORT

Mike Baden reported that the elections bill did not pass, so there will not be any big changes to the election process districts currently follow. The Commission will continue to look for a solution to the election concerns and appreciates all the efforts districts gave in response to their request for election proposals. There is no new information regarding the outcome of the accountability bills being discussed by the House and Senate.

The Commission is preparing for the new biennium. Details will be coming for the meeting in Ellensburg on April 14 & 15. There will be discussions on how to prioritize and organize decision packages.

There was a discussion about budgets for training programs such as fire, forest health, and ways to help growers with fire blight. The group discussed what agencies to include in those trainings.

Information for the Good Governance Conservation Accountability and Performance Program (CAPP) will be coming soon. Mike encouraged work on task orders, informed the group that the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) funding will be revamped, and asked for suggestions to improve the program. No meetings have been set to discuss NRI improvements.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mike asked for comments and or approval of the Forest Health Collaborative draft letter supporting an insurance fee for wildfire related programs through the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WA DNR). The Board discussed how funding would affect state and private landowners.

M/S/C Roger moved and Dillon seconded to approve adopting the Forest Health Collaborative draft letter in support of the fee. (Unanimous)

There was a discussion about the USFS Mission Project, the role that the Collaborative plays and how to move forward related to a lawsuit. There is an opportunity to meet with a county commissioner if the Board is interested, to better understand the County's position. The Board suggested that Mike talk with Okanogan Conservation District and possibly set up a meeting between Okanogan CD, the District and possibly Chelan County.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Carol Cowling conducted the payroll audit for the District. Her audit letter has not yet been received. One staff member is out on paid family medical leave to the end of February, and another will be out for a couple of weeks in March. Peggy added the office lease agreement to the agenda, to be discussed later in the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Conservation Commission Projects:

Natural Resource Inventory (NRI): There are two projects under this funding, one of which is completed. It is anticipated that the next cost share project will go forward in the same way.

NRCS Task Order: Task Order 1 involves conducting biological assessments for NRCS; the work is ongoing. Task Order 3 will be completed when staff can get out in the field. An additional Task Order for orchard planning has yet to be received.

Drought Project: The Drought contract has been extended through June.

Irrigation Efficiencies (IE): Irrigation Efficiencies work is ongoing.

Project Updates by Region:

Lake Chelan Basin: The District has done a free dump day at the Chelan Transfer station for the last several years. Mike is working with the Department of Ecology (DOE) to hold another event this year. The program information will be shared with the new Mayor of Chelan.

A request for funding support came from the Lake Chelan “Keep It Blue” campaign to do water quality research. After some discussion, the Board asked for a report on how the money is used before they approve the request. In general, they are supportive of the program.

County-wide Update: The District, in partnership with Chelan County Fire District 1, received funding from Coalitions and Collaboratives, Inc. (COCO). This funding helps with small scale projects for Firewise communities.

Entiat Watershed: Outreach work continues in the Entiat to share information on the remaining projects to be built. Project plans and concerns regarding the consolidation of the Chelan and Entiat Ranger stations were discussed.

Wenatchee Watershed: The District continues to work with the Washington State University (WSU) Extension on a two-year project to gather data on soil moisture and irrigation water management benefits to fruit quality and yield. Four growers participated in the program, and the cost was less than anticipated. Extending the time period may allow a couple more growers to be helped with upgrades. Time extensions and cost share programs will be discussed with the funder, Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF).

Progress on the wildfire preparedness social media push was discussed. Mike shared some of the concerns and challenges, but the program is moving forward. The District is working with local partners in the project area. More information will be brought to the next Board meeting.

Southern Chelan County (WRIA 40): Fire District 1 received FEMA funding. Funds will go toward the creation of a uniform assessment form, data collection and mapping for triage. Patrick may reach out for additional information.

Other Updates:

Grant Applications / Contract Updates: Staff are currently working on a Salmon Recovery Funding Board application for projects in the Entiat.

Contract & Agreement Legal Review: Legal counsel completed their review of government to government, and government to private agreement language. Mike asked the Board for

permission to have the next document review cover landowner agreements for non-Conservation Commission grants. The Board said to go ahead with the review. Discussion followed about other agreements and contracts needing review.

Election / Appointed Supervisor Update: Junell is the apparent winner of the election held in January. The Conservation Commission will certify the election in May. Amy indicated that she would like to apply for the appointed position, to replace Roger. Mike Baden said the interview was done on Tuesday and went well. The Commission will give notice of appointment after their March meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Lease Agreement: Peggy asked the Board to approve the new office space lease with Woods Investments, Inc. The new lease has a 3% increase for the first year, and a 2% increase for the second year on a two-year contract.

M/S/C Dillon moved and Roger seconded to approve the new two-year lease with Wood Investments, Inc. (Unanimous)

Nomination and Election of Officers: Roger nominated the following new slate of officers: Josh Koempel, Chair; Junell Wentz, Vice Chair; and Dillon Miller, Auditor.

M/S/C Roger moved and Dillon seconded to approve the new slate of officers: Josh Koempel, Chair; Junell Wentz, Vice Chair; and Dillon Miller, Auditor. (Unanimous)

Set March Special & Annual Planning Meeting Date & Agenda: The next District Meeting is a Special Meeting. Peggy will check with Board members to select a date that fits into their schedules. The date, time and conference room will be announced at that time.

The meeting adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

Summary of Official Actions:

Approved the Consent Agenda;
Approved adopting the Forest Health Collaborative draft letter in support of the fee;
Approved the new two-year lease with Wood Investments, Inc.;;
Approved the new slate of officers: Josh Koempel, Chair; Junell Wentz, Vice Chair; and Dillon Miller, Auditor.

BOARD MEMBER _____

OFFICE ASSISTANT _____